

A new infection affecting gay and bisexual men

CHAPS

Terrence  
HIGGINS  
TRUST



# LGV



**LGV causes serious inflammation inside the arse.**

**Most at risk are men fucking without condoms - or fisting without gloves.**

**LGV is easily cured with antibiotics if treated soon enough.**

**Left untreated it can end in serious damage to the arse and dick.**

## **What is LGV?**

LGV stands for 'lymphogranuloma venereum'. It's a serious sexually transmitted infection caused by a type of chlamydia bacteria.

## **Is LGV new?**

It was thought to be very rare in the UK until 2004 when cases were first noticed in gay and bisexual men. It's been spreading among them since.

## **What happens if a man gets LGV?**

A few people have had LGV without noticing but most get symptoms within a few weeks, some within a week of getting infected. Most gay and bisexual men are getting infected with LGV inside their arse. Blood or pus can come from it, with painful inflammation (called 'proctitis'). You might try to shit but find you can't or that it hurts. You might get painful anal abscesses or ulcers. You can feel ill, get a fever and might lose weight.

There may be a small, painless sore where the bacteria got into your bum or penis but most people don't get or notice a sore.

If you get LGV in your dick you might also get a discharge or pain when you piss. The glands in your groin can swell - so much that they might push through your skin and leak fluid.

It's rare to get LGV in the mouth or throat. If you do, the glands in your neck might swell.

## **If LGV isn't treated?**

Left untreated LGV can cause lasting damage. The inside of your arse can be so seriously damaged that you might need surgery. Your dick and ball sack can swell massively with blocked fluid.

## **How is LGV passed on?**

The bacteria usually get into someone's body through the arse, but can also get in through the dick or the mouth.

Fucking without condoms and fisting without gloves are the easiest way this happens. LGV can also spread when bacteria are carried from one arse to another on things like fingers, fists, dildos, enema or douching equipment - even on a condom-covered cock or a gloved hand.

## **Who gets LGV?**

So far the infection's been mostly seen in gay and bisexual men who:

- Fuck or get fucked without condoms
- Fist without gloves
- Have lots of sexual partners
- Go to sex parties, sex clubs or saunas.

Most of the men infected so far also have HIV.

## **What can be done if I get LGV?**

Here's the good news: as long as it's treated soon enough LGV is cured with three weeks of antibiotics and leaves no lasting damage.

## **How can I stop the spread of LGV?**

You cut your risk of getting LGV by using condoms – or latex gloves for fisting. If several men are being fucked or being fisted in the same sex session then condoms and gloves should be changed with each man – or hands washed between each arse. This stops the infection being passed from man to man.

Sex toys like dildos shouldn't be used on more than one arse in a sex session unless covered with a fresh condom with each arse they're used on – or the toys are cleaned with warm water and anti-bacterial soap before being used on a new man. Enema or douching equipment shouldn't be shared.

If you've had LGV once you can get it again.

## **The test for LGV**

If you have LGV, a swab taken from your penis or arse will test positive for chlamydia. If you have symptoms then that swab will then have more tests to be sure you have LGV and not the more common type of chlamydia. A check-up is crucial if you have any symptoms of inflammation in or around your arse – or in your dick. When going for a check-up ask for your arse to be checked for chlamydia if the clinic doesn't already do this. Don't have sex until you've been checked and treated.

## **Anything else I need to know?**

Because of the bleeding and skin damage LGV causes it makes it easier to pick up or pass on HIV. It also means you're more likely to get or pass on hepatitis C (a serious viral liver disease), syphilis and other STIs. If you get LGV, people you've had sex with also need to be tested and treated. If you don't want to tell people yourself you can ask a clinic to contact them anonymously.

This booklet is brought to you by **CHAPS**, a Department of Health-funded partnership of the following community-based organisations carrying out HIV prevention and sexual health promotion with gay and bisexual men in England.



THE  
EDDYSTONE  
TRUST



Supported by



## The HIV and sexual health charity for life

Website: [www.tht.org.uk](http://www.tht.org.uk) THT Direct: 0845 12 21 200

Registered office: 314-320 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP

Tel: 020 7812 1600 Email: [info@tht.org.uk](mailto:info@tht.org.uk)

© Terrence Higgins Trust, June 2010. Code 0125203

Terrence Higgins Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales (reg. no. 288527) and in Scotland (SC039986). Company reg.no. 1778149. A company limited by guarantee.

If you have any questions or comments about this resource, or would like information on the evidence used to produce it, please email [feedback@tht.org.uk](mailto:feedback@tht.org.uk) The information included in this publication was correct at the time of going to press. We plan to review publications after two years. For updates or for the latest information, visit [tht.org.uk](http://tht.org.uk)



Design Felton Communication 020 7405 0900 Ref: 11894